



**IN THE TITLE:**

Please delete the current title and replace with the following:

--SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR FIXATION OF ADJACENT VERTEBRAE--

**IN THE SPECIFICATION:**

On page 1, please insert the following paragraph after the title and before the heading "Background of the Invention":

--This application is a continuation of application Number 09/042,910, filed March 17, 1998, now issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,033,406; which is a continuation of application No. 08/677,135, filed July 9, 1996, now issued as U.S. Patent No. 5,728,097; which is a division of application 08/437,523 filed in May 9, 1995, now issued as U.S. Patent No. 5,569,248; which is a continuation of application No. 08/116,351 filed September 2, 1993, now abandoned; which is a continuation of application No. 07/938,708 filed September 1, 1992, now abandoned; which is a division of application No. 07/852,577 filed March 17, 1992, now issued as U.S. Patent No. 5,171,279. --

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel claims 1-17 without prejudice.

Please enter the following claims 20-33:

-- 20. The system of claim 18, further comprising a bone screw, wherein said first diameter is sized to receive said bone screw therethrough.